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CLAIMS

1) A territorial surveillance and/or security control system based on monitoring vehicle license plates, characterized by comprising:

- at least one mobile surveillance unit (2) for automatically reading license plates of stationary and moving vehicles, and for immediately generating alarms during patrol by the mobile surveillance unit (2); said alarms being generated by immediately and instantaneously comparing detected license plates with a list of wanted license plates available on said mobile surveillance unit; and

- a permanent surveillance centre (3) communicating with the mobile surveillance unit (2) to locate the mobile surveillance unit by radio, to gather, file, and consult the license plates detected by the mobile surveillance unit (2), and to handle the alarms generated by the mobile surveillance unit; said permanent surveillance centre being responsible for updating the list of wanted license plates and transmitting it to the mobile surveillance unit.

2) A system as claimed in Claim 1, characterized in that the mobile surveillance unit (2) comprises:

- a vehicle (4) equipped with an on-vehicle navigation system (5); and

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- a license plate reading device (6) on the vehicle (4) and communicating with the on-vehicle navigation system (5) of the vehicle (4); the on-vehicle navigation system (5) controlling communication with the permanent
5 surveillance centre (3) to transmit any alarms generated by the mobile surveillance unit (2).

3) A system as claimed in Claim 2, characterized in that the license plate reading device (6) comprises:

- a sensor device (8) for picking up the vehicle
10 license plates; and

- an on-vehicle processing unit (11) connected to the sensor device (8) to read and memorize the license plates picked up by the sensor device (8).

4) A system as claimed in Claim 3, characterized in
15 that the sensor device (8) comprises:

- at least one camera (12) for picking up vehicle license plates; and

- a lighting device (13) combined with the camera (12) to ensure clear pickup and reading of images in any
20 external lighting condition.

5) A system as claimed in Claim 4, characterized in that the lighting device (13) is a LED lighting device operating in pulsed mode and synchronized with the camera (12).

25 6) A system as claimed in Claim 4 or 5, characterized in that the lighting device (13) generates

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a light beam in the close to infrared spectrum to limit interference by ambient light.

7) A system as claimed in any one of Claims 4 to 6, characterized in that the on-vehicle processing unit
5 (11) comprises:

- an image acquisition and processing device (15) connected to the camera (12) to acquire the images picked up by the camera, and to extract character strings of the detected license plates;
- 10 - a lighting control device (16) connected to the lighting device (13) to time and synchronize light emission by the lighting device; and
- a data storage device (17) for storing character strings of the detected license plates, together with
15 associated georeference data supplied by the on-vehicle navigation system (5).

8) A system as claimed in any one of Claims 3 to 7, characterized in that the sensor device (8) comprises:

- two cameras (12) for picking up license plates of
20 vehicles to the right and left respectively of the mobile surveillance unit (2); and
- two lighting devices (13), each associated with a respective camera (12).

9) A system as claimed in any one of the foregoing
25 Claims, characterized in that the permanent surveillance centre (3) comprises:

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- a radio-location station (22) for locating by radio and communicating with the mobile surveillance unit (2); and

- a license plate control station (24) connected to
5 the radio-location station (22) to gather, file, update, and consult the license plates detected by the mobile surveillance unit (2), and to handle any alarms generated by the mobile surveillance unit.

10 10) A system as claimed in any one of the foregoing Claims, characterized by also comprising:

- first communication means (7, 23) enabling communication between the permanent surveillance centre (3) and the mobile surveillance unit (2) on patrol; and

- second communication means (18, 25) enabling
15 communication between the permanent surveillance centre (3) and the mobile surveillance unit (2) at the start and end of patrol.

20 11) A system as claimed in Claim 10, characterized in that the first communication means comprise telephone communication means (7, 23) employing a mobile telephone network; and the second communication means comprise wireless communication means (18) employing a wireless LAN network (25).